

The Anti-Slavery Bogle.

GERRIT SMITH ON THE DECISION IN THE DRED SCOTT CASE.

Peterborough, March 18th, 1857.

Hon. D. C. LITTLETON, Speaker of the Assembly.
My Dear Sir—I see that your Republican Leg-
islature is beginning to move against the Decision
of the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Case.
But I cannot see why it should. It strikes me
that it would be more consistent for it to honor
that Court with a vote of thanks. For what under-
standing of the Constitution, it does this Decision
declare? Nothing more than that, instead of being
a citizen of the United States, the black man may
in the eye of the Federal Constitution, be in every
part of the nation, mere property. But is not this
a logical deduction from the Republican doctrine,
that, in some parts of the nation, he is mere
property? The Supreme Court has gone nothing
like as far as this Republican doctrine would war-
rant. Had it gone to the extent of declaring that
the black man is not a man, but property, every-
where, it would not have been so far from the
scope of this doctrine. For if he is property
anywhere, then he is property everywhere. The
celebrated assertion of Henry Clay, that what the
law makes property is, is no better than
nonsense. The name of a thing, and that only,
determines whether it is, or is not, property.
Hence, since the Republican party admits that
the black man is property in Virginia, it is logi-
cally bound to admit that he is property in New
York also. For as it can be only in the light of
his nature that he is property in Virginia, so too,
in the light of the same nature, is he prop-
erty in New York. That it is nature, and not
an enactment, which makes property, would be
quickly and indignantly felt by us all, were
Virginia to enact, that barley and cheese are
not property, and that the New York farmer, who
brings them to her markets, shall be entitled to no
rights of property in them. Holding a Republi-
can to the legitimate consequences of his admis-
sion of property in man, he would have no more
right to complain of this invasion of the rights
of property by Virginia, than a Virginian would
have to complain that he is not allowed to hold slaves
in New York. The simple truth is that as long as
the Republican party admits that the Constitution
ordains, or permits, property in man anywhere, it
is stopped from complaining of a Decision, that
he may be, or even a Decision that he is, property
everywhere. Republicans are inconsistent should
have nothing to do with the Lecombe Case, save to
admit that the slaves were slaves in New York,
as well as in Virginia.

The Democratic and American parties are, of
course, put all their hands in the pockets of
the Republican party, and in hatred of slavery. Nevertheless,
the nation is perishing because of the folly of this
party. How great the folly, which persists in the
policy of slavery, and which is the cause of all our
troubles, by all just interpretation, contains not, from
beginning to end, no slavery line! And may I not
add, how great too the dishonesty of those who
will recognize a law for the enslavement of
their brother; but who, if made slaves, would
be set free at the expense of trampling under
foot whatever Constitutions, or statutes, or
decrees for slavery—ay, and at the expense too of
whatever amount of the blood of their oppressors.

Nothing is law, which cannot honestly be
administered as law;—and hence slavery is not law.
The Judge on the Bench, who administers it as law,
may not be entirely conscious of his knavery.
Nevertheless, he is a knave, for he is doing what
another, as he could have others do, would not
do. I hear it said, that you are to pass a "Personal
Liberty Bill." Most sincerely do I hope, that it
will not be such a one, as Massachusetts, or Wis-
consin, has passed. A Bill, which recognizes the
lawfulness of slavery, and which would give a
reduction to chattelhood in any conceivable case
of a being made in the image of God—is a bill
for very and abhorrent. If you would pass a
"Personal Liberty Bill," that would leave your
slaves, and these would be your slaves, and these
penalties the crime of claiming any man as a
slave.

Great and frequent events are crowding the
Republican party to choose its future. Will it
remain upon its present law and false ground, and
perish, ere long, and miserably? Will it rise
upon an Abolition party; expel slavery from the
land; and live forever in the grateful hearts of
the wise and good?

Why has slavery made unceasing progress for
sixty years, and come at last to be installed as
the law of the land? Because it is a great po-
litical power, which, having nothing more fright-
ful than restrictions, negations, and deprecations,
has not yet been yielded against slavery. Unprin-
ciple policy—political expediency—answers the
demand of slavery, and the demand of slavery
yields up one half, and praying to be left the
other. But whenever Liberty shall be brought
forth to answer such demand, she will answer it
with a counter demand. In reply to the call of
slavery for more, she will call for less of
slavery. Liberty knows, and must remedy for
the wrongs of slavery;—and that is the abolition
of slavery. Will the Republican party apply this
remedy? Will the Republican party honor
Liberty?

The question is often put to me, whether
I would let the Dred Scott Decision answer the
people to rebel against the Supreme Court. It is a
foolish question;—for that Court is itself the
rebel—the rebel against all law and all govern-
ment. When a Court or a Legislature goes out
of its province, and attempts to do what it
attempts naked impossibilities, and utters blas-
phemies—the rebel is to be found in the party, that
does all this, and not in the people, who trample
all this under foot. Surely no people would re-
spect as law the statute or decree, which declares
stone wall, or wood stone. Why then should any
people respect as law the statute or decree, which
declares the infinitely greater and blasphemous
word, that man is merchandise? Had we a
Government worthy of the name of Government,
it would sooner think of hanging Chief
Justice Taney and his associates than of hanging
those, who refuse to submit to their devilisms.

With great regard, your friend,
GERRIT SMITH.

From the Richmond Enquirer.

AGITATION OF THE SLAVERY QUES- TION.

Every conservative lover of law and order,
every supporter of the Constitution, and every
of the Union, every American mind and heart
lost to the faith of the founders of freedom,
lost to the cause of civil and religious liberty
throughout Christendom, must have long ago be-
come surfeited with the incessant agitation of the
slavery question.

For more than fifty years the question of sla-
very has been more or less a subject of discord
and contention; and more recently, in some shape
or other, it has been continually coming up in the
councils of the nation, in the State Legislatures of
the non-slaveholding States, before the people of
the North, as an issue in elections, local and fed-
eral, and before the people of the South as an
issue to its agitation at the North, to be consid-
ered with reference to its vindication as one of the
essential elements of our society, its maintenance

as an institution for the public good, and the pro-
tection of our rights, originating in it, and under
it, as the great God-given guaranty of the freedom
of the white man through the thralldom of the
black—the accomplishment of the destiny of the
African and Anglo-Saxon races by an observance
and enforcement of the relations between them
designed and decreed by divinity. From first to
last, from the ordinance of 1787 to the adoption of
the Missouri Compromise, from 1820 to 1857, the
agitation of this question has been growing greater
and greater, and fiercer and fiercer, until it has
become a rapid rising and falling, and increasing
its virulence and vehemence with every new
event and incident that have arisen, upon which
it could possibly be brought to bear, until the Union
shudders under its shocks, and patriots of all
parties gaze upon its reckless and ruinous re-
sults in the halls of Congress, in the State Legisla-
tures and in every quarter and corner of the North.
That the country is corrupted, that legislation in
momentous matters of national interest, is not
now so rapid rising around us, threatening to
tear the ship of state from her moorings, and dash
her to pieces where the surf surges high, from the
confluent waters at Mason and Dixon's line.

It is a waste of words to talk about it, and it
would be a waste of time to attempt it.
Subsequent to the election of Mr. Buchanan,
and previous to the recent decision of the Supreme
Court, there seemed to be something like a bow of
promise in the political sky. The angry waves
raved less loudly, the clouds looked lighter, and
sunshine seemed to be smiling in the shadows away.
Abolitionism had been baffled and beaten in a
desperate assault upon the citadel defending the
Constitution and the Union, the sovereignty of the
States and the rights of the South; and there was
high hope that its most furious onset might be its
last, except in feeble bands, the scattered remnant
of a routed host. But, since then, there is every
evidence of an organization contemplated, and it
may be begun, upon a broader basis than ever, for
the purpose of placing the country in the hands of
the enemies of slavery in 1860.

The election of the judges of the Supreme
Court by the people, is henceforth to be one of the
aims of the Abolitionists, for acquiring the means
of natural to artificial law, and to their own
own ideas of law. If they can
compel that end, the strongest bulwark of the
South will have been broken. But, before they
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